



Stop Stealing Her Childhood Campaign Toolkit

Girls Not Brides is excited to launch a brand new campaign to shine a spotlight on child marriage and encourage governments to take action on their commitments around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And we need your help!

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1. What is the 'Stop Stealing Her Childhood' campaign?

In 2015, world leaders committed to end child marriage by 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With only 11 years to go, it is time governments take action to implement these commitments. If efforts to address child marriage are not scaled up significantly, we will not solve this problem by 2030.

From 24-25 September, Heads of Government are meeting at the [SDG Summit](#) for the first time since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 to look at progress already made, and to identify areas that need further investment in order to achieve the Goals by 2030.

The *Girls Not Brides* community needs to remind the world that child marriage is a core issue within the SDGs – eight of the 17 goals cannot be achieved without ending child marriage. We can't let world leaders forget about it or fail to fund efforts to address it if we want to stop a further 150 million girls being married by 2030.

To make sure commitments to end child marriage are acted on, *Girls Not Brides* has launched a global campaign calling on world leaders to register a UN SDG Accelerator Action outlining their specific plans to address child marriage in their country. The SDG Accelerator Action is a UN led process encouraging governments to register a commitment for achieving the SDGs on the [UN SDG2019 website](#) in advance of and during the SDG Summit. By making a commitment on child marriage in an official forum in front of the rest of the world, we as civil society have a tangible basis to hold them accountable and urge them to act.

We want to show leaders how much support there is around the world for this action. We are doing this by collecting signatures via an online petition.

National action

Our global petition will help put international pressure on governments. But for them to really listen, we need to make sure citizens in their countries are putting pressure on them too. This is why we are asking you to launch your own country-level campaign calling on your government to reinforce their commitment to end child marriage at the SDG Summit.

You can show your government and head of state that your country won't stand for child marriage, and demand action from your elected leaders, by launching a national petition. It's a way of drawing attention to the issue and putting pressure on a decision-maker to take action around a key moment - like the SDG Summit.

Stronger together...

Your national petition will form part of the larger global campaign that the *Girls Not Brides'* team will be promoting in the lead up to the SDG Summit. By working together to collect as many signatures as possible over the next couple of months, we will be able to combine all our efforts for one large petition delivery in New York during the SDG Summit. If we make enough noise - governments will have to listen!

2. Campaign objectives

What do we want to achieve? We want:

- Governments to register an 'SDG Accelerator Actions' on addressing child marriage.
- World Leaders make public statements that action to end child marriage must be sped up as part of the 2030 Agenda.
- Global and national attention on the issue of child marriage to increase in the lead up to, and during, the SDG Summit. This will be demonstrated by the participation of the *Girls Not Brides* Partnership in the 'Stop Stealing Her Childhood' campaign.

You can read more about the global campaign and objectives on the [Girls Not Brides website](#)

3. Setting up your campaign

This toolkit will show you how to set up an online petition and join our campaign.

There are just three simple steps you need to follow:

- 1) Plan your campaign,
- 2) Set up an online petition and
- 3) Launch your campaign

Plan your campaign

In the global movement to end child marriage, there are moments when a decision must be made by leaders and change can happen. In this situation, a public outcry can make all the difference.

An online petition can get the word out about your issue and to help drive change. It's an easy way to capture signatures from across the country to show support for ending child marriage and to pressure decision-makers to take action.

Before you launch your campaign, you need to:

Identify your petition target: Heads of State will be attending the SDG Summit, so you need to address your petition to your Head of State.

Clarify your petition ask: Be specific about what you want your campaign target - your Head of State - to carry out. Think of one clear commitment or action you want your government to make that will help advance an end to child marriage in your country. For example,

I call on my government to prioritise ending child marriage within the 2030 Agenda by registering a UN SDG Accelerator Action committing to ensuring the funding and implementing of multi-sectoral policies and programmes that prevent child marriage and support married girls.

Choose your partners: Joining forces with other civil society organisations in your country can help you spread the word and get more signatures. If you are interested in finding out which other *Girls Not Brides*' members are active in your country, there is a full list on our [website](#) or please connect with the *Girls Not Brides* team on info@girlsnotbrides.org

Set up an online petition

For this campaign, we're using an online campaigning platform called [Avaaz](#) and we recommend that you use it too - it's easy to set up and is completely free. Here's how:

a) Head to www.avaaz.org and click 'START A PETITION'

b) Enter your title. We suggest:

Tell [insert your decision maker- e.g. President Kenyatta] to protect girls in [your country e.g. Kenya] from child marriage.

c) Enter your decision maker. *E.g. President Kenyatta*

d) Explain the problem you want to solve and outline your petition ask.

We recommend that you make this text as specific as possible to your context.

You may want to use or base your petition on the following template text:

[Insert percentage of girls married] girls are married in [your country] every year. That's [Insert percentage of girls married] girls who are robbed of their childhood. They're at risk of violence, trapped in poverty, often pulled out of school, and can be left with serious health complications or even face death due to early pregnancy.

In 2015, world leaders committed to end child marriage by 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With only 11 years to go, it is time governments take stronger action to implement these commitments. If efforts to address child marriage are not scaled up significantly, a further 150 million girls will be married as children before 2030.

This September at the SDG Summit, Heads of State are meeting for the first time since the adoption the SDGs. Now is the moment for our government to show they are serious about ending child marriage by telling the world the actions they intend to take.

We call on you to make an [SDG Acceleration Action](#) and outline your government's plan to implement and fund action on SDG 5.3 in [insert name of country] – bringing an end to child marriage. [here is where you can include a specific request relevant to your country]

Act now to show you will not tolerate violence against children and will use your power to end child marriage and protect girls' futures.

e) Add a photo.

If possible, use a strong photo of a young activist from your organisation or work who is 16 years or older.

You must have obtained informed consent from any girl whose photograph you use and please ensure that photos comply with our [Safeguarding Guidelines](#).

You are also welcome to use one of the photos below. Please ensure you credit the photo as labelled:

Asia - Credit: Girls Not Brides / Abdullah al Kafi



Africa - Girls Not Brides / Thom Pierce



Latin America – Credit: Girls Not Brides / Fran Afonso



f) Publish your petition

Launch your campaign:

Once you've published your petition, it's time to launch your campaign and spread the word both online and offline.

1. **Email:** This is one of the best ways to get signatures for your petition. Send an email to your contacts asking them to stand up for girls and sign the petition. Once they've shared the petition, ask them to share it with their networks too.
2. **Social Media:** Share your petition link on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram Stories and ask people to sign. Posts with an image are more likely to grab people's attention. If you have any stories of girls who have been affected by child marriage, this can really help to bring the issue to life and will encourage more people to sign your petition. Here are some template social media messages you could use:
 - I. [x] number of girls in [country] become #childbrides every year, risking violence, injury & even death in childbirth. [name of Head of Government] has the power to put an end to this. Sign our petition. Show them you won't stand for #childmarriage #StopStealingHerChildhood
 - II. Girls should be walking to school, not down the aisle. Sign our petition to show world leaders that it's time to #endchildmarriage #StopStealingHerChildhood
 - III. #Childmarriage steals girls' futures. As [name of head of government] prepares for the SDG Summit, let's show them we won't tolerate violence against girls. Sign out petition: #StopStealingHerChildhood

4) Campaign messaging

Please find some key messaging you can use in your campaign emails or other outreach. You can personalise these messages to your campaign by adding in statistics and case studies relevant to your country.

- [%] girls under 18 are married in [country]. Child marriage has serious, far-reaching consequences for a girl. She's at greater risk of violence and remaining trapped in poverty, often pulled out of school, and she can be left with serious health complications or even face death due to early pregnancy.
- The Sustainable Development Goals Summit this September is a big moment for change. Governments from around the globe will come together to decide the future of our planet. We can't let them forget about girls.
- Unless we end child marriage we won't achieve eight of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including those on poverty, food security, health, education, gender equality, economic growth, and peace and justice.
- One way we can get governments to sit up and take notice is by showing them that child marriage is a form of child sexual abuse. We know girls who are married before 18 are more likely to suffer from intimate partner violence, including sexual, physical, psychological and emotional violence.

5) Next steps

Once you've set up your petition and sent off your first campaign email - congratulations, you have officially launched your campaign!

The next steps will be to promote your petition and gain as much support as possible for your cause.

What you can expect from *Girls Not Brides* secretariat to support your campaign

In the next few weeks, we will send you:

- Tools and guidelines for how to amplify your petition through the media and online
- Advocacy resources on the importance of linking child marriage to other global issues, like Violence Against Children
- A set of social media assets to promote your campaign
- Tips on how to plan and hold a petition delivery event.

For support please contact:

Zoe Birchall: zoe.birchall@girlsnotbrides.org

Yasmin Mace: yasmin.mace@girlsnotbrides.org

Tag us on social media (see below) and don't forget to use the campaign hashtag: #StopStealingHerChildhood!

Twitter: @GirlsNotBrides Instagram: @GirlsNotBrides Facebook: Girls Not Brides

6) Further information and resources

Background: The Sustainable Development Goals and child marriage

In 2015, governments from around the world came together to agree on a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals provide governments with a blueprint for action on a range of development issues from gender to climate change, and from health to economic growth. Under Goal 5 (gender), there is a target on ending child marriage:

5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Target 5.3 gives governments a mandate to take action and address child marriage by 2030, which is when the current SDGs expire.

Find out more about how child marriage fits into the SDGs. in this brief:

<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/sdgs-and-child-marriage/>

Girls Not Brides' Global Petition: You can check out the global 'Stop Stealing Her Childhood' campaign here:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/community_petitions/World_Leaders_Stop_stealing_her_childhood_tell_world_leaders_to_protect_girls_from_child_marriage/

SDG Advocacy Brief: This *Girls Not Brides'* brief outlines how child marriage links to the other SDGs and why it is central to achieving the 2030 Agenda:

<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/sdgs-and-child-marriage/>

SDG Partnerships Platform website: Find out more about the SDG Summit and the Accelerator Actions: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships/>

Child Marriage Atlas: The *Girls Not Brides* interactive atlas provides child marriage data for every country in the world. You can explore the map to understand the prevalence of child marriage globally, and find out what is being done to address

it: <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/where-does-it-happen/atlas/#/>

Out of the Shadows: A Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation': is a new 60-country benchmarking index examining how countries are responding to the threat of sexual violence against children. It shines a light on the often silent response to sexual abuse and outlines barriers and pathways to progress. You can use this information to show your country where they must act to make progress: <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com/>

Girls Not Brides' Theory of Change: a visual diagram that demonstrates the range of approaches needed to address child marriage and how they intersect:

<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/theory-change-child-marriage-girls-brides/>